KRISHNADEVA RAYA

The king of Vijayanagara, Vira Narasimha, was very ill. He was afraid that after his death, his much loved and popular brother, Krishnadeva Raya, would seize the throne from his little son. So he asked a trusted minister to put Krishnadeva to death. The conscience-stricken minister could not perform such a heinous deed and convinced the bewildered prince to escape. Fate had already decreed that Krishnadeva Raya would one day rule the Vijayanagara empire and take it to its zenith of glory.

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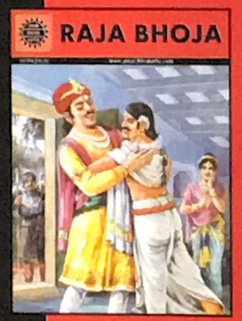

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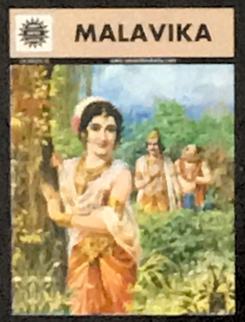

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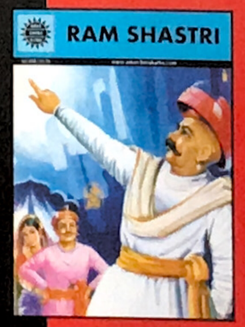

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BRAVEHEARTS

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

KRISHNADEVA RAYA

THE ILLUSTRIOUS KING OF VIJAYANAGARA

Vol 636 | ₹50

KRISHNADEVA RAYA

VIJAYANAGARA, FOUNDED IN 1336, ROSE TO THE ZENITH OF ITS PROSPERITY IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

IN 1509, VIRA NARASIMHA, KING OF VIJAYANAGARA, FELL SERIOUSLY ILL. IN THE CAPITAL, PEOPLE WONDERED WHO WOULD SUCCEED HIM.

THE KING MAY NOMINATE HIS LITTLE SON...

NEVER! NOT WHEN HIS BROTHER, THE ABLE KRISHNADEVA, IS ALIVE.

OUR KING KNOWS WHAT IS BEST FOR THE COUNTRY.

BUT AT THAT MOMENT THE KING WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT WAS BEST FOR HIS SON.

WILL YOU FULFIL MY LAST WISH, APPAJI*?

SPEAK OUT, YOUR MAJESTY.

MY SON WILL NEVER BE KING SO LONG AS KRISHNADEVA IS ALIVE.

*MINISTER THIMMARASU WAS AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED AS APPAJI.

KRISHNADEVA MUST DIE. PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL PUT HIM TO DEATH.

WHAT! PUT KRISHNA TO DEATH!

AS THE UNHAPPY MINISTER WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE —

WAIT! AS A PROOF OF YOUR HAVING KILLED HIM, HIS EYES SHOULD BE SHOWN TO ME, TOMORROW.

AS YOU COMMAND, YOUR MAJESTY.

WHEN THIMMARASU CAME OUT, HE MET KRISHNADEVA.

HOW IS THE KING, APPAJI?

HE'S MUCH BETTER.

THEN THE MINISTER LOWERED HIS VOICE.

KRISHNA, ARE YOU PREPARED TO DIE FOR THE KING?

MOST CERTAINLY, APPAJI. THE KING IS THE COUNTRY AND I AM PREPARED TO DIE FOR MY COUNTRY.

THIMMARASU SPENT A SLEEPLESS NIGHT.

APPAJI, KRISHNADEVA MUST DIE.

I AM PREPARED TO DIE FOR MY COUNTRY.

THE NEXT DAY —

... COME ALONE AND IN SECRECY.

AS YOU WISH, APPAJI.

THAT NIGHT —

TAKE THIS HORSE, DISGUISE YOURSELF AND LEAVE THE CAPITAL.

WHY, APPAJI?

I'LL TELL YOU SOME OTHER TIME. NOW, MAKE HASTE AND GO. REMEMBER, NO ONE MUST KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

YOU CAN TRUST ME.

AND KRISHNADEVA LEFT.

THIMMARASU THEN HAD A GOAT KILLED AND BROUGHT ITS EYES TO THE KING.

KRISHNA IS NO MORE, YOUR MAJESTY. HERE ARE HIS EYES.

MY SON AND I WILL FOREVER BE INDEBTED TO YOU, APPAJI.

DAYS LATER, WHILE WANDERING INCOGNITO, KRISHNADEVA HAPPENED TO VISIT A TEMPLE WHERE CHINNADEVI, THE TEMPLE DANCER, WAS PERFORMING.

WHAT A DIVINE BEAUTY! SHE LOOKS LIKE A LOTUS THAT HAS JUST BLOSSOMED.

AFTER THE DANCE —

WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE? WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME?

I HAVE NOWHERE TO GO.

CHINNADEVI TOOK HIM HOME WITH HER.

MOTHER, THIS MAN HAS NO HOME. SO I BROUGHT HIM HERE.

THEN MAKE THIS YOUR OWN HOME, SON.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME, STRANGER?

I HAVE NO NAME.

CHINNADEVI DID NOT PRESS HIM FURTHER.

SO YOU KNOW HOW TO WIELD A BOW!

WATCH ME, STRANGER; AND WATCH THAT BIRD.

SHE SHOT DOWN THE BIRD. KRISHNADEVA WAS AMAZED.

YOU ARE A GOOD SHOT, INDEED, CHINNA!

AND YOU ARE A COWARD, AFRAID EVEN TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME!

A FEW DAYS LATER —

MUST YOU LEAVE?

I MUST. GOD WILLING, I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN.

MEANWHILE, THE SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE OF KRISHNADEVA DID NOT GO UNNOTICED IN THE CAPITAL.

WHY ISN'T THE PRINCE SEEN ANYWHERE?

HAS HE BEEN DONE TO DEATH?

GOD FORBID!

THE NEWS OF VIRA NARASIMHA'S ILLNESS AND KRISHNADEVA'S DISAPPEARANCE REACHED GULBARGA, THE CAPITAL OF MAHMOOD SHAH, THE BAHMANI KING.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ATTACK VIJAYANAGARA AND MAKE IT OURS.

WHAT IF THE KING DIES AND KRISHNADEVA REAPPEARS TO SUCCEED HIM, YOUR MAJESTY?

THEN WE'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS INEXPERIENCE.

A FEW DAYS LATER, AT VIJAYANAGARA —

YOUR MAJESTY, THE BAHMANI KING IS PLANNING TO INVADE OUR EMPIRE.

MY KINGDOM IS IN DANGER! I MUST LEAD MY MEN...

YOUR MAJESTY, COMPOSE YOURSELF. YOU ARE NOT FIT TO WALK EVEN A FEW STEPS.

ALAS! I AM AN INVALID. THE PRINCE IS A MERE CHILD. AND KRISHNA, WHO COULD HAVE ABLY DEFENDED THE KINGDOM, IS NO MORE. APPAJI, WHY DID YOU LET ME HAVE MY WAY?

THIS IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR KRISHNADEVA TO COME BACK.

KRISHNADEVA IS ALIVE, YOUR MAJESTY. FORGIVE ME, I DID NOT OBEY YOUR COMMAND.

FORGIVE YOU, APPAJI? I AM INDEBTED TO YOU! YOU HAVE SAVED ME FROM THE SIN OF KILLING A BROTHER.

LATER, WHEN THIMMARASU BROUGHT KRISHNADEVA TO MEET THE KING —

KRISHNA, FORGIVE ME. I HAVE DONE YOU A GREAT WRONG. AFTER ME, YOU MUST SHOULDER THE BURDEN OF RULING THE KINGDOM.

LET BYGONES BE BYGONES, YOUR MAJESTY.

WHEN THE AILING KING DIED, THE COUNCILLORS DECIDED TO CROWN KRISHNADEVA AS THE EMPEROR.

KRISHNADEVA, CUSTOM REQUIRES THAT YOU BE MARRIED BEFORE THE CORONATION.

THEN, APPAJI, I WILL SHOW YOU THE GIRL WHO HAS WON MY HEART.

THE NEXT DAY HE TOOK THE ELDERLY MINISTER TO THE TEMPLE OF VIRUPAKSHA.

ISN'T SHE LOVELY, APPAJI?

BUT A TEMPLE DANCER CAN'T BE THE QUEEN OF VIJAYANAGARA!

KRISHNADEVA, HOWEVER, WAS FIRM IN HIS RESOLVE.

APPAJI, I MET HER WHILE TRAVELLING INCOGNITO. I HAD NO NAME, HOME OR FORTUNE AND YET SHE GAVE HER HEART TO ME. I'D RATHER GIVE UP THE KINGDOM THAN DEAR CHINNA.

WE WILL SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO RECONCILE THE DICTATES OF TRADITION* AND THE DICTATES OF YOUR HEART.

* THE FIRST WIFE OF A KING SHOULD BE A WOMAN OF NOBLE BIRTH.

FINALLY, KRISHNADEVA RAYA ACCEPTED TIRUMALA DEVI, A ROYAL PRINCESS, AS HIS FIRST QUEEN...

...AND WAS CROWNED EMPEROR OF VIJAYANAGARA ON AUGUST 8, 1509.

SOON AFTER THE CORONATION, HE MARRIED HIS BELOVED, CHINNADEVI.

MEANWHILE, THE BAHMANI KING HAD COMPLETED THE PREPARATION FOR THE CAMPAIGN AND REACHED DIWANI WHERE KRISHNADEVA RAYA GAVE HIM BATTLE.

NO, WE CANNOT FIGHT KRISHNADEVA RAYA.

THE BAHMANI ARMY HAD TO BEAT A HASTY RETREAT.

KRISHNADEVA IS AFTER US!

FLEE!

LATER, KRISHNADEVA RAYA ADDRESSED HIS ARMY.

OUR VICTORY SHOULD NOT MAKE US COMPLACENT. PRATAPA RUDRA OF KALINGA AND ADIL KHAN OF BIJAPUR ARE OUR SWORN ENEMIES. ONLY WHEN THEY ARE DEFEATED, WILL OUR KINGDOM KNOW PEACE. SO, FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE, WE MUST SUBDUE THEM.

AT UDAIGIRI, HIS INACCESSIBLE FORT, PRATAPA RUDRA, KING OF KALINGA, WAS AMUSED TO HEAR ABOUT KRISHNADEVA RAYA'S PLANS TO ATTACK HIM.

KRISHNADEVA TO ATTACK ME AND TAKE MY FORTS! HA! HA! LET HIM FIRST FIND HIS WAY HERE!

TIRUMALA RAUT, YOU WILL TAKE CHARGE OF FORT UDAIGIRI. PRINCE VIRABHADRA WILL TAKE CARE OF FORT KONDAVIDU. I WILL DIRECT THE OPERATIONS FROM FORT POTANUR.

WE SHALL NOT FAIL YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

KRISHNADEVA RAYA PERSONALLY LED THE ARMY.

WHAT A DENSE FOREST! WHAT SHALL WE DO?

HAVE THE TREES PULLED DOWN AND THE PATH CLEARED. OUR ARMY SHALL MOVE ON.

A MERE FOREST WAS NOT GOING TO PREVENT KRISHNADEVA RAYA FROM ACHIEVING HIS AIM.

THE VIJAYANAGARA ARMY SET TO WORK WITH ITS ELEPHANTS, CLEARED THE PATH···

···REACHED UDAIGIRI, SCALED THE FORT AND ATTACKED!

TIRUMALA RAUT COULD NOT HOLD OUT FOR LONG.

YOUR MAJESTY, TIRUMALA RAUT, OUR CHIEF, HAS SENT HIS TURBAN AS A TOKEN OF SURRENDER.

THEN ON WE GO TO FORT KONDAVIDU!

BUT THE VIJAYANAGARA ARMY, ON REACHING KONDAVIDU, FOUND IT HARD TO SCALE THE STRONG FORT.

THE WALL IS STEEP; AND OUR ARROWS DON'T REACH FAR ENOUGH TO KILL OUR ENEMIES.

HAVE BAMBOO SCAFFOLDS ERECTED AROUND THE FORT.

THE VIJAYANAGARA SOLDIERS GOT DOWN TO WORK. AS SOON AS THE SCAFFOLDS ROSE AS HIGH AS THE FORT —

WATCH, APPAJI! WATCH THIS BLAZING ARROW PIERCE THE VERY HEART OF KONDAVIDU.

THE ARROW FOUND ITS MARK. HEAPS OF GRAIN DEEP WITHIN THE FORT, CAUGHT FIRE.

LOOK! THEY'VE SET FIRE TO THE GRAIN.

FORGET THE GRAIN. THEY'VE ALMOST ENTERED THE FORT. LET'S FIGHT THEM OFF.

IN THE CONFUSION THAT FOLLOWED, KRISHNADEVA AND HIS ARMY ENTERED THE FORT AND EFFORTLESSLY TOOK IT.

AT POTANUR, PRATAPA RUDRA WAS WORRIED.

KRISHNADEVA IS NOW LIKE A TIGER THAT HAS TASTED HUMAN BLOOD.

WE NEED NOT WORRY. THE SIXTEEN LOYAL CHIEFTAINS HAVE PROMISED THEIR SUPPORT, MY LORD.

THE SIXTEEN CHIEFTAINS SOON ARRIVED AT POTANUR.

LEAVE ALONE KRISHNADEVA, NOT EVEN AN EARTHQUAKE WILL SHAKE US FROM THE FORT.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR COURAGE. AND WE TREASURE YOUR LOYALTY TO THE THRONE.

PRATAPA RUDRA WENT ROUND THE FORT ON AN INSPECTION TOUR.

REINFORCE THIS SECTION. IT DOESN'T LOOK SOUND.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

WE HAVE ENOUGH STOCK TO LAST A YEAR, YOUR MAJESTY.

SEE THAT THERE IS PROPER DISTRIBUTION AND NO WASTAGE.

THUS PRATAPA RUDRA WAS FULLY PREPARED WHEN KRISHNADEVA RAYA LAID SIEGE TO POTANUR.

THE BATTLE CONTINUED FOR MONTHS. KRISHNADEVA RAYA WAS WORRIED.

A HUNDRED DAYS WE'VE FOUGHT. BUT THE FORT IS NOT YET OURS, APPAJI.

WE SHOULD RESORT TO STRATAGEM, YOUR MAJESTY.

THIMMARASU WROTE A LETTER TO HIS SECRET AGENT INSIDE THE FORT.

HE THEN TIED THE LETTER TO THE FOOT OF A HOMING PIGEON, AND SET IT FREE.

THE BIRD FLEW STRAIGHT TO THE AGENT.

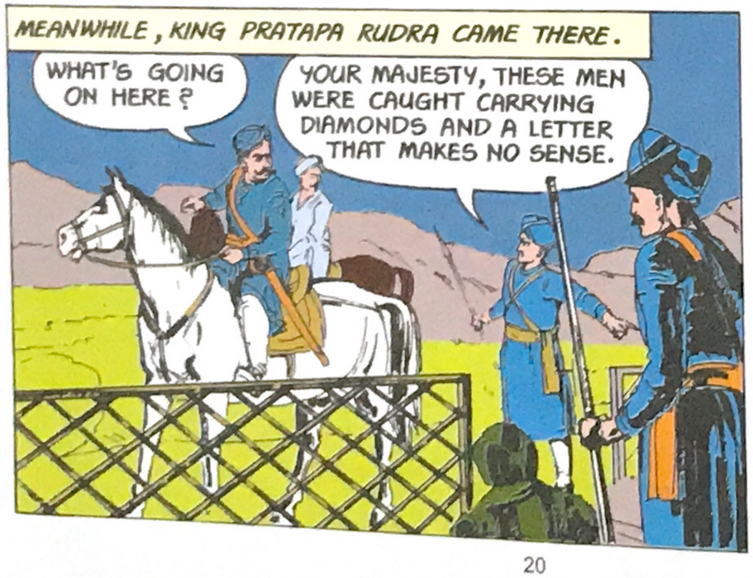
WELCOME HOME! AND WHAT HAVE YOU HERE?

THE SECRET AGENT HAD A MEETING WITH HIS ASSOCIATES.

WE WILL CARRY OUT THE ORDERS TOMORROW NIGHT. IT SHOULD BE WELL-TIMED — WHEN PRATAPA RUDRA MAKES HIS ROUNDS.

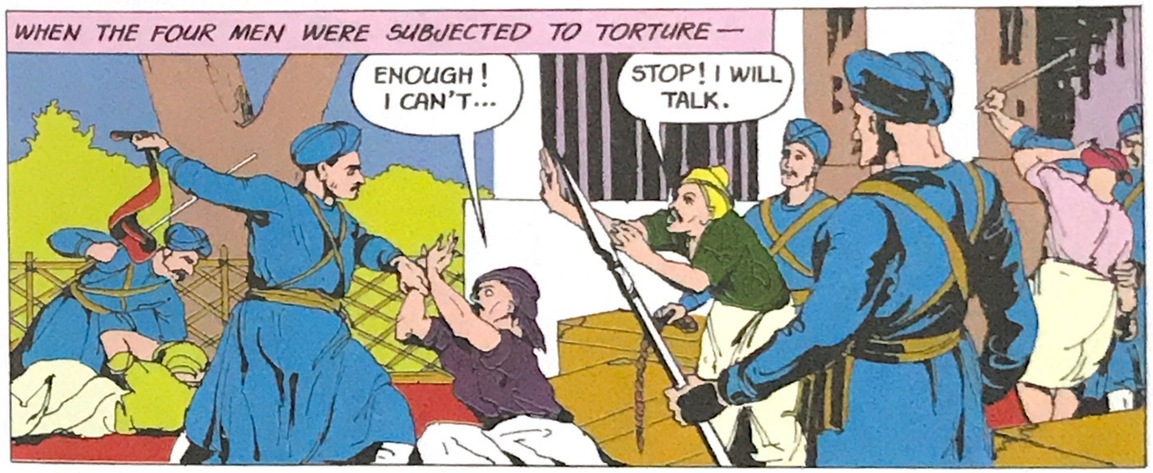
AT MIDNIGHT THE NEXT DAY —
STOP! WHAT ARE YOU CARRYING? OPEN THE BOXES.

THE MEN WERE TAKEN TO AN ARMY GUARD POST WHERE THE BOXES WERE OPENED.
DIAMONDS!! TO WHOM WERE THEY GOING? SPEAK UP!


MEANWHILE, KING PRATAPA RUDRA CAME THERE.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
YOUR MAJESTY, THESE MEN WERE CAUGHT CARRYING DIAMONDS AND A LETTER THAT MAKES NO SENSE.

THE KING READ THE LETTER.
TRUSTED FRIEND, THIS IS THE SECOND CONSIGNMENT. ONE MORE WILL BE SENT AS SOON AS YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ACCOMPLISH YOUR MISSION AT THE APPOINTED TIME...

THEY WON'T SAY FOR WHOM THESE ARE MEANT.
MAKE THEM TALK.


WHEN THE FOUR MEN WERE SUBJECTED TO TORTURE —
ENOUGH! I CAN'T...
STOP! I WILL TALK.

KING KRISHNA-DEVA RAYA HAS SENT THESE GIFTS.
TO THE SIXTEEN CHIEFTAINS.

THE TRAITORS! I'LL KILL THEM ALL! WITH MY BARE HANDS!

BUT PRATAPA RUDRA SOON REALISED THAT DISCRETION WAS THE BETTER PART OF VALOUR.

THEY ARE SIXTEEN, AND I AM ALONE. I SHOULD RUN BEFORE THEY CAPTURE ME AND TAKE ME TO KRISHNADEVA.

MEANWHILE, A GUARD CAME RUNNING TO THE CHIEFTAINS.

THE KING IS FURIOUS. HE CAUGHT THE MEN WHO WERE CARRYING A GIFT OF DIAMONDS FOR YOU FROM KRISHNADEVA RAYA.

NONSENSE! FROM KRISHNADEVA RAYA? FOR ME? SHEER NONSENSE!

LET US GO TO OUR KING AND EXPLAIN.

WHAT IF HE REFUSES TO BELIEVE US?

SUPPOSING HE THROWS US INTO PRISON? THIS IS HIS TERRITORY.

IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO ESCAPE FROM HERE WHILE WE CAN.

THE SIXTEEN CHIEFTAINS QUIETLY SLIPPED AWAY FROM THE FORT WITH THEIR MEN.

AND KRISHNADEVA RAYA MARCHED TRIUMPHANTLY INTO POTANUR. THIMMARASU'S RUSE HAD PAID OFF.

VICTORY TO KRISHNADEVA RAYA!

LATER, PEACE WAS DECLARED BETWEEN VIJAYANAGARA AND KALINGA. KRISHNADEVA RAYA MARRIED JAGANMOHINI, THE KALINGA PRINCESS.

MEANWHILE, AFTER THE DEATH OF MAHMOOD SHAH, THE BAHMANI KING OF THE DECCAN, ISMAIL ADIL KHAN, HAD DECLARED HIMSELF THE INDEPENDENT RULER OF BIJAPUR.

WE'LL TAKE GULBARGA AND IMPRISON THE INCOMPETENT SONS OF MAHMOOD SHAH.

KRISHNADEVA RAYA RETURNED TO HIS CAPITAL AND FOUND THAT ADIL KHAN HAD TAKEN RAICHUR WHILE HE WAS AWAY.

WE WILL HAVE TO DECLARE WAR AGAINST HIM.

WE NEED HORSES.

SIDDI MERCAR, AN OFFICER IN THE COURT OF VIJAYANAGARA, WAS SUMMONED.

GO TO THE PORTUGUESE AND BUY HORSES WORTH 40,000 PAGODAS FROM THEM.

MANY DAYS PASSED. SIDDI MERCAR DID NOT RETURN. THEN SPIES CAME WITH NEWS

SIDDI MERCAR HAS FLED WITH THE 40,000 PAGODAS TO BIJAPUR, YOUR MAJESTY.

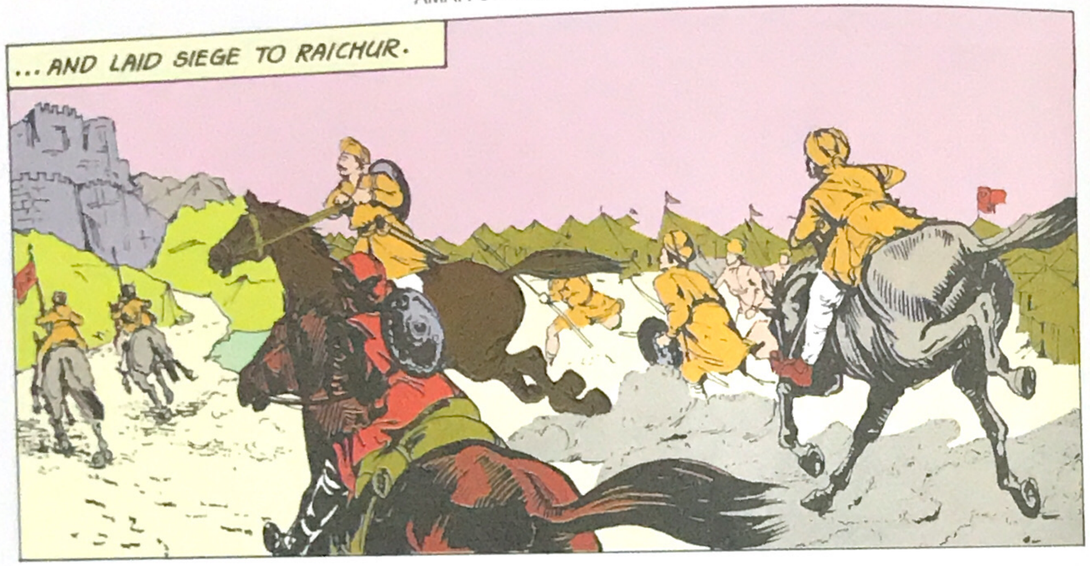
THIS IS TREASON. SEND AN AMBASSADOR TO BIJAPUR REQUESTING ADIL KHAN TO REPATRIATE SIDDI MERCAR.

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE AMBASSADOR RETURNED FROM BIJAPUR.

YOUR MAJESTY, THE RULER OF BIJAPUR PROFESSES THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF SIDDI MERCAR.

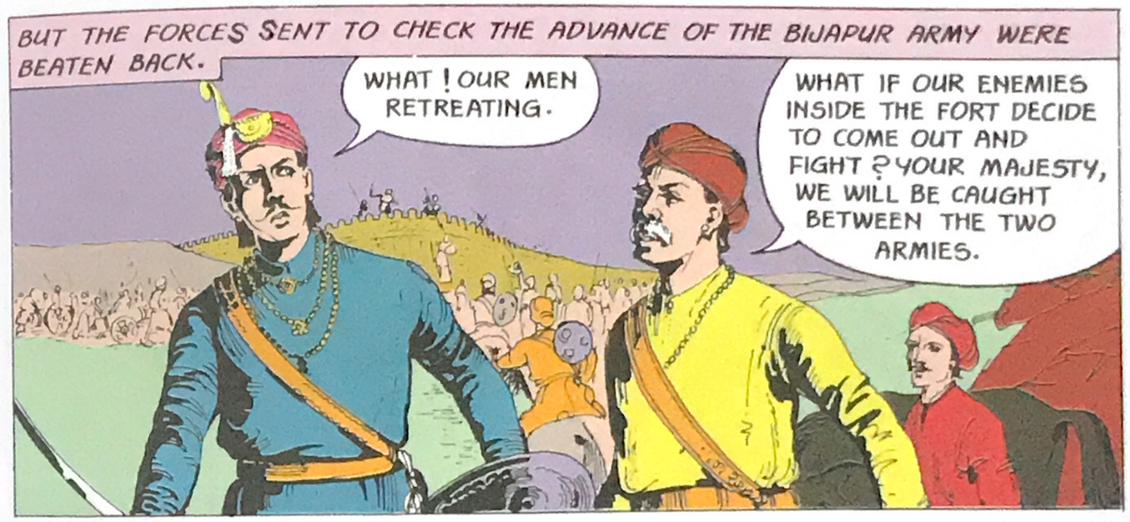
HE IS ASKING FOR TROUBLE. WE'LL MARCH AGAINST HIM AFTER WE TAKE RAICHUR WHICH RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO US.

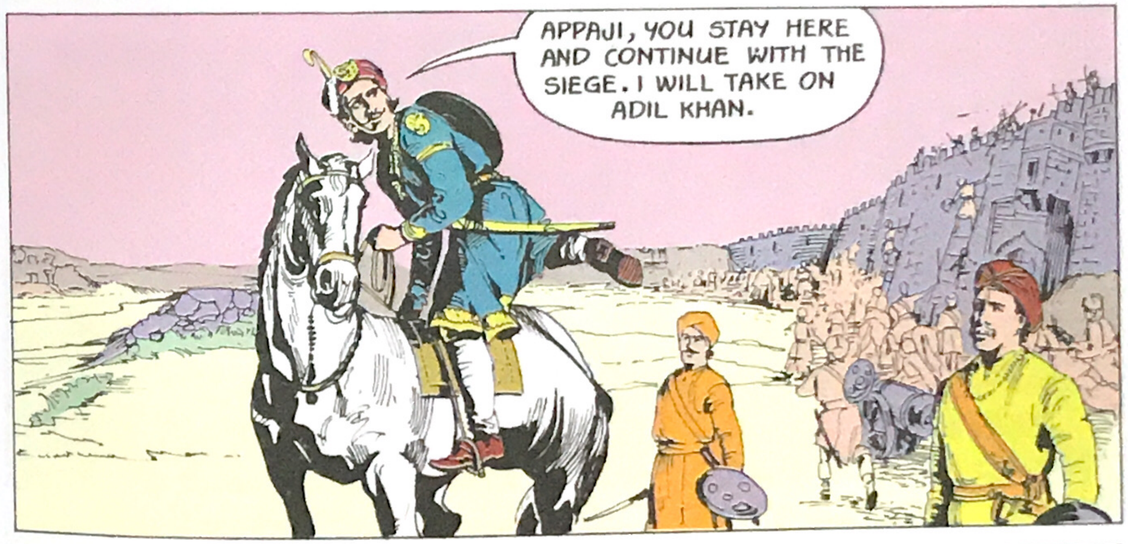
KRISHNADEVA RAYA AND HIS ARMY SOON MARCHED OUT OF VIJAYANAGARA...

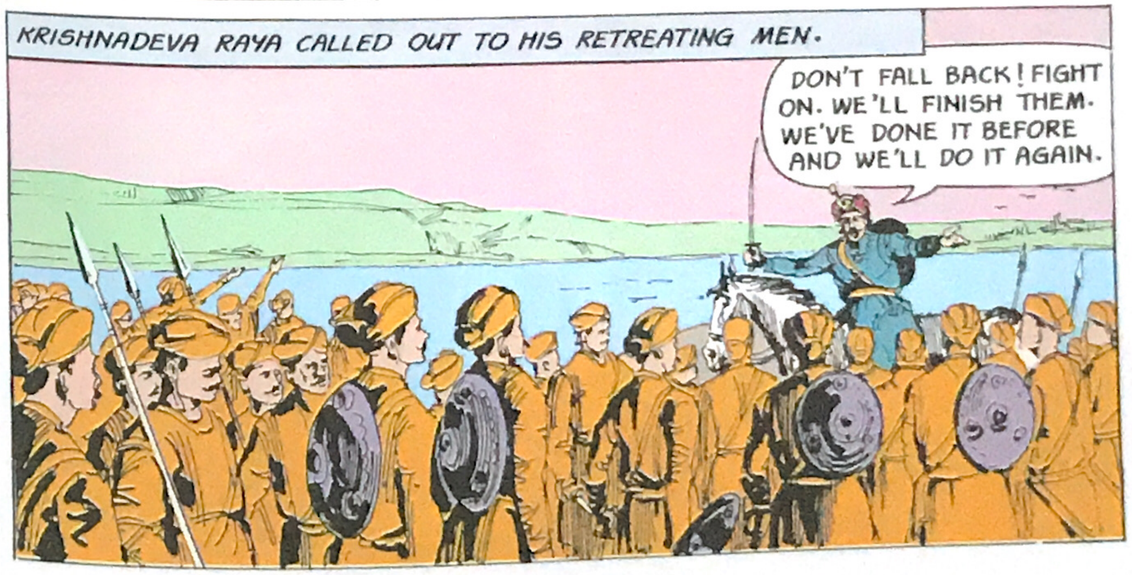

...AND LAID SIEGE TO RAICHUR.

AS SOON AS HE LEARNT OF THIS, ADIL KHAN RUSHED TO THE DEFENCE OF RAICHUR. HE CAMPED ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER KRISHNA.

THE NEWS SOON REACHED KRISHNADEVA RAYA.
YOUR MAJESTY, ADIL KHAN HAS CROSSED THE KRISHNA RIVER AND WILL BE ATTACKING US FROM THE REAR.
APPAJI, SEND PART OF OUR FORCES TO STOP ADIL KHAN. LET THE REST CONTINUE WITH THE SIEGE.


BUT THE FORCES SENT TO CHECK THE ADVANCE OF THE BIJAPUR ARMY WERE BEATEN BACK.
WHAT! OUR MEN RETREATING.
WHAT IF OUR ENEMIES INSIDE THE FORT DECIDE TO COME OUT AND FIGHT? YOUR MAJESTY, WE WILL BE CAUGHT BETWEEN THE TWO ARMIES.


APPAJI, YOU STAY HERE AND CONTINUE WITH THE SIEGE. I WILL TAKE ON ADIL KHAN.


KRISHNADEVA RAYA CALLED OUT TO HIS RETREATING MEN.
DON'T FALL BACK! FIGHT ON. WE'LL FINISH THEM. WE'VE DONE IT BEFORE AND WE'LL DO IT AGAIN.

INSPIRED BY HIS WORDS, THE SOLDIERS FOUGHT WITH FRESH CONFIDENCE. NOW THE BIJAPUR ARMY WAS ON THE RUN WITH THE SOLDIERS OF VIJAYANAGARA IN HOT PURSUIT.

WHILE THOUSANDS OF HIS SOLDIERS AND HORSES FELL INTO THE RIVER WHICH WAS NOW IN SPATE, AND PERISHED, ADIL KHAN HIMSELF GOT AWAY ON AN ELEPHANT.

GOD, LET ME ESCAPE WITH MY LIFE!

THE ENEMY HAS LEFT BEHIND 40,000 HORSES, 1,000 ELEPHANTS, 400 CANNONS AND 900 GUN CARRIAGES.

GOOD! NOW ON TO RAICHUR.

KRISHNADEVA RAYA RETURNED TO THE SIEGE OF RAICHUR. AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, A PORTUGUESE FRIEND OF HIS HAPPENED TO PASS BY.

CHRISTOVO, DO YOU SEE HOW STRONG THAT FORT IS? IT'S WITHSTANDING OUR MOUNTING PRESSURE.

I'LL HELP YOU TAKE IT WITH MY MUSKET, YOUR MAJESTY.

CHRISTOVO AND HIS MUSKETEERS GUNNED DOWN THE GUARDS AND THE CHIEF OF THE FORT.

AND KRISHNADEVA RAYA AND HIS ARMY ENTERED RAICHUR.

ADIL KHAN SENT AN AMBASSADOR TO KRISHNADEVA RAYA.

OUR KING REQUESTS YOU TO GIVE BACK HIS TERRITORIES.

THAT I WILL, WHEN ADIL KHAN COMES TO ME AND FALLS AT MY FEET.

ADIL KHAN NATURALLY DIDN'T TURN UP. KRISHNADEVA RAYA'S ARMY MARCHED TOWARDS GULBARGA.

GULBARGA SOON FELL. KRISHNADEVA RAYA GAVE ASSURANCES TO THE CITIZENS.

YOUR LIVES AND PROPERTY WILL COME TO NO HARM.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

THE FIRST THING KRISHNADEVA RAYA DID AT GULBARGA WAS TO SET FREE THE THREE SONS OF MAHMOOD SHAH, THE BAHMANI KING.

ADIL KHAN, OUR OWN GOVERNOR AT BIJAPUR, KEPT US CAPTIVE AFTER THE DEATH OF OUR FATHER. AND YOU, OUR SWORN ENEMY, HAVE FREED US.

PRINCE, VIJAYANAGARA AND THE BAHMANI KINGDOM ARE NEIGHBOURS. WE SHOULD LIVE IN PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP.

KRISHNADEVA RAYA MADE THE FIRST SON OF MAHMOOD SHAH, THE BAHMANI KING OF THE DECCAN.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE EMPEROR OF VIJAYANAGARA FOR HIS KINDNESS.

ON HIS RETURN TO VIJAYANAGARA, KRISHNADEVA RAYA VISITED THE TEMPLE OF VIRUPAKSHA.

LORD, BY YOUR GRACE, I COULD REALISE MY FATHER'S DREAM OF TAKING UDAIGIRI AND RAICHUR. LORD, CONTINUE TO BE KIND TO YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT.

IN A SHORT SPAN OF 20 YEARS, KRISHNADEVA RAYA MADE VIJAYANAGARA STRONG AND PROSPEROUS.